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MAGAZINE

FALL 1990



**INSIDE: THE WEDDING PRESENT
THE BLAKE BABIES--H.R.
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It's 1990. The realm of music that
was supposed to at least threaten us
with liberation is squarely dominated
by a kind of boutique punk rock
whose aspirations are so retarded and
conservative that it would stagger the
minds of the most craven Zep-freak
stoners. As grunge rock is pumped
out monthly in bland, slick and
extremely limited quantities and the
Industrial dance market is choked
with "subversive" product that's
predictable enough to compete with
Madonna, the Japanese proffer a
simple, ancient lesson:

How to Kill

In their voracious appropriation of
the youth culture received from
America as if from the hand of God,
the Japanese are second to none. As a
loyal and hip Japanese consumer, Mr.

Eye Y. loves Disco and the Stooges as
much as anybody. He loves them to
death. He and his sidekick, One, wear
athletic logo t-shirts, blow huge blue
Bubblicious bubbles and have a
"crew" just like Public Enemy. But the
"version" of "Detroit Rock City"
recorded by one of Mr. Eye Y.'s bands
is violent enough to wipe the slate
totally clean; after about ten seconds
you realize that Hanatarash (it
translates roughly to "snotnose") gives
as much of a fuck about power chords
as they do about fake rock 'n' roll
desperation. Instead, they roar and
scream and swerve like a big, rusty
1969 model Pontiac burrowing
through Woodfield Mall in search of
the Automatic Teller Window. They
just destroy, and do it in such a god-

damned silly way that the ruins leave
you laughing.

On the flipside of the second
Hanatarash lp (look for it if you're in
Japan, or get the third one from
RRRecords), they "handle" the Butt-
hole Surfers: "Piss-hole Surfers" whips
about two seconds of the precious
cult-movie weirdness of *Moving to
Florida* into two minutes of a yattering
skid whose pitch builds, dives and
halts. The timing and dynamics are
broken up in a very deliberate, human
way; the sudden shifts and dramatic
pauses bespeak people wreaking their
urges on a pile of familiar sonic
debris and turning it into a record of
wild abandon and total entertainment.
This is not some trippy, sanc-
tioned "Industrial" band trying to
package their boredom as transgres-
sion; as Hanatarash say, "SUCK PIV
FUCK COIL WE LOVE DISCO
SOUND!"

If you're interested in Boredom,
transgression, sucking PTV and
fucking Coil, Eye has another thing for
you. Kramer, of Shimmy Disc in New
York, recently smelled the coffee
through the fumes and "discovered"
Eye's other current band. Thanks,
man. The Boredoms were, for the
most part, previously confined to
Japan's Trans Records, except for a 7"
ep released by Public Bath and a
Public Bath 7" compilation, in which
Eye and various associates maul beats
in a very Boredoms way. The *Soul
Discharge* lp (recently re-released on
Shimmy Disc) is as fine a thing as the
band has done. Rather than noise,
this band's stylistic jump-off point (or
G-spot, call it what you will) is dance
music: the members pose in disco
outfits plus flippers, goggles, fur hats,

and 45s hanging from the tongue. The record bears a tiny "northern soul club" logo, and there is an injunction on the inner sleeve, "OK, DON'T CHECK THIS SOUND!"

Unlike Hanatarash, they use normal instruments, and even play guitar lines and drumbeats, but they produce bouncy grooves and then carelessly immolate them—only to begin again after an unpredictable pause. The Boredoms sound totally impatient and completely free of devotion to the idea of a single song being carried through with the limp equipment of a beat, a riff, a comfy little melody that will come around regularly and even a chorus, like some whipped dog begging for food.

Side 96 of the lp starts with lurching funk, haunted by a shrilling electronic sound, phonetically entitled "POW WOW NOW". It blends into the second song, which seems to pertain to the sweaty genitals of black dance music performers. A man states: "J.B. dick and Tin' Turner pussy badsmell." The music bursts in, stepping on the end of his peculiar observation with the kind of thunderous beat that Void and Minor Threat once produced, except it's got a kind of marching-band oom-pah swing, and the man is suddenly shouting the line in rhythm over it. It stops, he exclaims, "J.B. DICK!" (boom! on the bass tom)

"J.B.DICK" (wham!) "JBDICK" (boom!) "JBDICK!" (thoom!) and the thesis is repeated, this time in a roar. A kind of call and response develops between the words and a wailing sigh; then a four-beat guitar and drum line take the place of the sigh, until, exhausted, the instruments peter out and they scream the title one final time. It sounds as if they milked every ounce of sexual pleasure out of a "mere" ridiculous phrase. Indeed, you stop caring about the utterance as "lyrics" to a "song": it's something they play with, throw against the wall, roll in their hands. The voice trades place with the band, beats and walls depending on physical urges. The Boredoms record the sheer, astounding sound of words and instruments at play. Finally, someone's put the ball back in Hugo Ball (sound poet; don't worry, he's dead, he can't hurt you).

Earlier in Eye's recorded history, he played in a band called the Incapacitants with a man named T. Mikawa. They diverged at some point, and Mikawa, along with Jojo and others, released a number of live records on the Alchemy label that indulge in sheer, burning, assaultive noise. In contrast to Eye's posse, this band, known as *Hijo-Kaidan* (it means "emergency staircase"; call me up and we can discuss this) dress like

graduate students. An ep dating back to 1983 plays on the Japanese blurring of English consonants; it is entitled "In Harlem/No Harm" and was produced at Collira Studios. No harm? There is a paradoxically delicate, sympathetic quality to their female vocalist's walls. At their first practice, they destroyed all their equipment—taking off where The Velvet's "European Son" sounds like it ended.

If Hanatarash attack recorded music, and the Boredoms parody rock to the point of scorching intensity, KK Null descends to the bottom of it. Playing with a variety of outfits—Zent Geva (from one of whose records this article gets its title), Absolut Null Punkt or simply Null—and putting out records on his own Nux Organization label, his strategy is more focused. Like much of Japan's best music, it can't be listened to for normal rock rewards: the awaited return of a hook, the sugary jolt of a chorus or the clever turn of phrase that sounds glorious for just the moment you hear it. Fuck that shit. On "Dead Car, Sun Crash" (from the second *Dead Tech* sampler of Japanese music from Dossier, a label chiefly notable for its invaluable reissues of the mindbending Chrome lps), the four slow beats, guitar clang

KILL continued on page 13

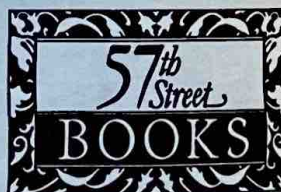
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The **Blake Babies** are a three-piece pop band from Boston, MA via Bloomington, IN. Their second, most recent lp *Earwig* (Mammoth) is an amazing improvement over their first effort, *Nicely, Nicely*, as the band agrees. Vocalist **Juliana Hatfield** of the band, though she has been described as "sounding just like my little sister Caitlin."

WHPK's Carrie Golus and **Travis Wilkerson** interviewed **Juliana** (vocals, bass, guitar), **Freda Boner** (drums) and **John Strohm** (guitars, drums) when they were in Chicago playing with the Chills. Shortly before the interview started, John and Carrie were reminiscing about working together at Newbury Comics, a record store in Cambridge, MA.

Travis: You've been touring with the Chills for 3 weeks. How much longer are you going to be doing that?

Juliana: A few more days.
Travis: If you play really well, do they let you climb into their Winnebago and jump around?

Juliana: Yeah.
Freda: We eat their cashews.
Juliana: Just recently, they let us in. They let us in after about a week.

John: Well, they didn't have a Winnebago the first week.
Juliana: Oh, that's right. They're terribly, terribly nice.

Carrie: You used to be a 4-piece, right?
Juliana: I played guitar, and therefore we had two guitars. Obviously, getting rid of a guitar made the sound more...sparse, I guess. Our live sound is cleaner and there are more dynamics, more highs and lows.

Freda: We've had a lot of different bass players.

Juliana: We kicked a few out, and one of them quit. They were all good and nice guys, but it didn't really fit.
Carrie: So had you been playing bass for a while?

Juliana: No, I just picked it up, 'cause I thought that was the only thing to do. I just learned how to play.

Travis: About your whole new lineup, how does that affect the way you're writing songs at this point?

Juliana: It didn't affect the writing at all. We don't write together. We write alone and then we bring in the songs and teach them to the others.

Travis: Who's the main lyric writer?

Juliana: I am, I guess.
Carrie: Who writes the music, then?

Juliana: I write about half, and John writes about half.

Travis: On the cover of "Loose", there's that part where the music

quiets down and your voice just comes up and it sounds an awful lot like the way my little sister would sing. I don't mean that as a putdown at all, I think it's really wonderful. And then once you're screaming, it's really terrifying. How did your parents respond to that?

Juliana: That's my mom's favorite song off the record. She doesn't listen to lyrics though. She doesn't know what's going on.

John: We assume she didn't ever hear the original.
Carrie: The song "Alright" seems sort of contradictory to your other really tough lyrics; it seems very sympathetic and nice.

Juliana: Yeah, I kind of wish there were more like that. I guess I sound kind of mean.

Carrie: Which is what blows Travis away half the time. We were reading the article about you in *Puncture*—did you realize they misquoted some of your lyrics, and were you pissed off?

Freda: Not only that, they spelled all of our names wrong, as if they couldn't just flip over the lp and check the spelling.

John: He's the nicest guy, and we really like him, and it was a really fun interview, but he's got his head up his ass.

Freda: Sloppy Journalism. Bad news.
John: He could have done his homework.

Carrie: He said you have "songs to die for". Do you have songs to die for?

Freda: Doesn't "to die for" mean they're really great?
Carrie and Travis: Yeah.

Juliana: We think so, I guess.
John: How can you ask us that?

Freda: At least one person thinks that we do.
Travis: But it has specific connotations, when you say "to die for".

Freda: Like, a teenage girl would say that about a prom dress or something.

Travis: Using that as an example, everything else we've read [about you] has been really positive. Is that pretty typical of what the response has been?

Juliana: Yeah.
John: People who hate the record must just stay home.

Freda: The review in *Forced Exposure* was pretty interesting.

John: It was really positive. I thought people like that would totally hate us. So it's kind of nice.

Carrie: We feel your second album is a lot stronger. Do you feel that way as well?

Freda: Yeah. We had no money for the first record at all. Just whenever we'd get a few bucks together, we'd record some stuff, basically. And it was a total mish-mash of things.

Juliana: Plus, we got better.

Freda: We just needed some experience.

John: All the songs were Juliana's and my early efforts. A lot of the songs we brought into the band already written.

Juliana: I could hardly sing or anything.

Freda: I definitely couldn't play drums at all.

John: Our next record's going to be a lot better. We made a tape of the songs, and everybody says they're better. It's just coming together, it's evolving. We're not getting burned out on it at all.

Carrie: [to John and Juliana] So you two are from Bloomington?

Freda: I'm from Bloomington. We met when we were 15.

Carrie: So you and John knew each other and moved to Boston. Why Boston?

Freda: Just had to get out of Bloomington.

John: I knew there were a lot of clubs there to play and a lot of radio stations. We just thought [if] we wanted to start a band, we'd go there.

Travis: So were you able to get bit roles in *Breaking Away*?

Freda: I was going to be an extra, but my mom wouldn't let me go down to the stadium.

Juliana: Why not?

Freda: My mom was a bitch—I mean, she wasn't, just that day she was. My mom's great, I love her very much.

John: That was one of the first times I got really drunk, for the extras thing in *Breaking Away*.

Freda: You were eleven!
John: We got oil cans of Foster's Lager. I drank a whole one, started on another one and I started to feel really queasy. The whole time, the camera was rolling. It was 100 degrees out. I was in the back, totally intoxicated, unable to move.

Travis: So were you guys "cutters"?
John: I think we're about as close to cutters as anyone is. The real stone-cutters don't live in Bloomington, they live in Bedford, which is where Juliana's father is from. It's like a real working class, non-college town. They all look like kids who are delinquent and hang out. You see 'em around looking crappy, like we did. We did basically what the cutters do.

Freda: We went to the quarry.
John: But really, I hate to shatter your whole concept of that movie, but the cutters don't really exist. I don't think there were ever any stonecutters in Bloomington. All the quarries are in Bedford.

Carrie: Did any of you guys go to college in Boston? Or Bloomington?

Juliana: I went to the Berklee College

of Music [in Boston]. I'm short one credit [from graduation]. I majored in ensemble, like, I have to sing in a group.

John: Maybe you could finagle some ensemble credit because you've been on the road in a band for the last six months.

Juliana: Isn't that insane? You can't get credit for touring with a band.

Freda: That is really stupid. You have to sing with a choir...

Juliana: Or a special group, like a jazz group.

Freda: You have to sing "My Funny Valentine".

John: I went to Berklee also for a couple of years. I wanted to be an engineer. I never got through the program.

Carrie: Like, an audio engineer.

John: Yeah, I can't engineer my way out of a cardboard box now.

Freda: I went to a lot of colleges: Indiana University, University of Massachusetts, Massachusetts College of Art and the School of the Museum of Fine Arts. And I'm going to Berklee this summer. Just for five weeks, to check it out.

John: You know, there aren't many bands like us there.

Carrie: No, I would definitely say, you guys are not a Berklee band.

John: People kind of scratch their heads when they hear about us. They're like, "Why aren't we getting our records put out? We play jazz fusion."

Travis: Why the title *Earwig*?

Juliana: We like it 'cause it's ambiguous. It's a little bug that goes in your ear and eats your brain.

John: That's just a myth. It's like silverfish, it's the same myth. Like when you're sleeping, they crawl in your ear and eat your brain.

Travis: They had some of those on *Star Trek II: Wrath of Khan*.

John: We had a lot of different titles. It's really hard to title a record, to title anything, a song.

Carrie: Why was the first one called *Nicely, Nicely*? What does that have to do with anything?

Juliana: My dad used to say that. He'd walk around the house and every once in a while, he'd be like, "nicely, nicely."

Carrie: Do you guys have real jobs, or is this a full-time thing?

Juliana: We had to quit our jobs to tour.

Carrie: What were you doing before?

Juliana: I worked in a Polaroid gallery.

John: You know what I was doing.

Carrie: [to John] And you were at Newbury Comics. Were you in shipping and receiving, or in the store?

John: Shipping and receiving.

Carrie: Awesome job.

John: I know I met you when I worked with that guy. What's that guy's name, that you moved here with?

Carrie: Dan [Koretzky, of Drag City Records]. He's history. Let's not talk about that.

John: I don't want to talk about him either. He really pissed me off.

Travis: I think he pissed all of us off. We never liked him, except Carrie.

Carrie: Well, that was a big mistake. What did he do to you?

John: You know Lindsey was your good friend, right? I was really good friends with Lindsey too. She was talking about this guy Dan and I said, yeah, I met him. She said, "Well, you know what he said about you, the one day that you met him." I said, "No, what did he say about me?"

Carrie: Lindsey's kinda gossipy like that.

John: "He said you're a name-



dropper." I'm like, "What?" If there's anything I would never do, it would be to sit around and drop names. I said, "Well, why is that?" And she said, "Oh, he said that you said that your roommate is in the Volcano Suns."

(Juliana and Freda laughs) That was something that you'd say for clarity: "I live with this guy Bob [Weston], he's in the Volcano Suns." As if that's instant status or something.

Carrie: [to Freda] What job were you doing before?

Freda: I was working for *Forced Exposure* magazine, actually.

John: Now the truth comes out, why we got a good review in *Forced Exposure*.

Freda: Noooo...Jimmy has a lot of integrity. I edited stuff. I did a wide variety of tasks, including raking leaves.

Carrie: They pay you well and treat you well?

Freda: Yeah. I got to listen to a lot of good records too. It was really fun. It was a really awesome job. It was too bad I had to quit.

Carrie: There's one thing I really wanted to ask you. On the first album, your shirt is open and I was just curious, because I know then the *Pixies* came out with this album where this woman has no shirt on whatsoever and then *Christmas* came out with an album where Liz is covering her breasts with her hands like this, [demonstrates] Did you set a trend and what does it mean?

Juliana: Yeah, they're following my lead. I think it means that's a way to sell records, I guess.

Carrie: Why did you do it?

Juliana: We were in my apartment and my friend was taking a bunch of pictures and he's like, take your shirt off, so I went [poses], like that.

Freda: It was a joke and he took the picture. We thought it looked really cool.

Carrie: So the next thing you knew, it was on the album.

Travis: There's a line in "Grateful". "And my mother isn't coming". For the longest time, I thought you were saying, "And my mother is a commie."

Juliana: Oh, "I have to go vomit now/But my mother isn't calling."

Travis: Okay, "calling". Yeah, I really loved it, having a Communist mother myself.

Freda: I have one.

John: Freda's mother's a communist.

Carrie: You know, Michael Stipe used to change his lyrics if better ones were suggested. We thought we'd put that in as a suggestion.

Juliana: Yeah! I'm going to do that. That's great. [sings] "My mother is a commie."

Freda: We haven't played that song in a year.

Juliana: We don't really know how to play it.

John: Too many chords. Like two, or something.○

Tower of Babble

Paul Hudson, a.k.a. Joseph I, a.k.a. Ras Gabriel, a.k.a. HR, earned fame as the "throat" of the legendary Bad Brains. The Bad Brains roared out of the DC hardcore scene leaving molten toe prints all over punk's white noise color line. As they switched from furious, teeth-chattering hardcore to supertouch reggae, their audiences were pulled right along and swayed to praises of Jah Rasta Fari. What carried the audience along through the incongruities were HR's sincerity and charisma.

In full accordance with the DIY punk manifesto, HR, his brother Earl, Garry, and Darryl (Dr. Know), decided to form a band whose sound was so "fresh and innovative", no one could imitate it. They first began by calling themselves Mind Power, because, as HR said, they were "hoping to be able to have a name that would represent what [they] thought the youth needed." They played their first show in the Hudson basement in Forestville, MD in February 1979.

Off and on, HR would drop out of the Brains and embark on journeys into jazz, funk, dub, hard rock fusion and pure reggae, usually bringing his brother along for the ride. Zion Train and Human Rights showcased styles which were hard to fit into the Brains's fast-and-loud format.

Now with Human Rights, HR has begun to shape a career in reggae, jumping from a hardcore band which had a habit of slipping into reggae jams to being a reggae performer capable of capitalizing on reggae's increased popularity and the rise of North American reggae performers. WHPK's Nathan Ferguson, Benjamin Evans, and Carla Bruce caught up with HR at a recent Chicago show.

Nathan: Are you still working with David Byers?

HR: Off and on.

Nathan: Is he here tonight?

HR: No, unfortunately not, I called him this morning but he's not here.

Nathan: Is he the same David Byers from Peer Pressure, the old DC band?

HR: Yes.

Nathan: How would you compare the old DC days playing Hard Art Gallery and Madams Organ, and all that, with playing with HR and playing here in Chicago tonight? A big change?

HR: Well, all respects still and all praises unto Emperor Haile Selassie I, Jah Rasta Fari. It is—a difference, a big difference.

Ben: I was wondering, do you still keep up with your old friends from DC, Henry Rollins and Ian MacKaye?

HR: Oh yeah.

Ben: Have you heard Rollins's new record (Hard) or Fugazi's new stuff?

HR: The last thing I heard about Henry, he was working with the Bad Brains—Earl, Gary and Darryl. They did a movie track, a song by MC Hammer produced by Ron St. Germain. ("Kick Out the Jams" in Pump Up the Volume)

Ben: Watt, all those guys—Rollins, MC Hammer and the Bad Brains...

HR: Earl, Gary and Darryl.

Ben: Is MC Hammer rapping over that?

HR: No, he wrote the song (He's confused MC Hammer with MC5—Ed.) and Henry is singing it. The Bad Brains are playing it.

Nathan: So what's your connection at this point?

HR: I'm just an innocent stand-by.

Ben: Are you out of the Bad Brains?

HR: Yeah.

Nathan: So, over the last five or six years, how has that overlap worked between being with the Bad Brains and also doing the HR thing at the same time?

HR: Very educational.

Ben: Earl is playing with you guys tonight, so he's doing HR and the Bad Brains?

HR: Yeah.

Nathan: He's a busy man. I'm sure you are too. What other projects do you have going?

HR: Nothing really other than just Human Rights and you know, my Bible and my family and things.

Nathan: Could you tell us a little about your family and your religious upbringing?

HR: Well, I guess I could.

Nathan: You don't have to get too personal.

HR: There's not too much to it. I come out of a Baptist family, we were Christians and went to church. I went to Sunday school and I started singing in church when I was thirteen and um, there were never any atheists, nobody said [they] didn't like God. I wasn't forced to not be with Him. I came from a free family, and they left it up to me to decide what I choose in life to do, you know? And that's it, nice n' simple.

Ben: I heard that you first heard the Sex Pistols back in the late seventies and started the Bad Brains. It seems a lot of early punk bands were very openly atheistic. What do you think of bands like the Dead Kennedys or MDC who have come out with anti-religious, specifically, anti-Christian tunes? How would that relate to being in a hardcore band that's...

HR: Well, you know, the music is um, expressing different rhythms. And

depending upon the rhythm that your heart is in at that time—in the A B C D E chord structure—they approach it more like an outsider looking in than an insider looking out, because some people in the band do believe in God, so you can't really say the whole band doesn't believe in God.

Nathan: What kind of crowd do you expect when you're out on tour?

HR: All kinds!

Nathan: Young, old, reggae, hardcore...

HR: All kinds, all kinds.

Ben: I heard that one of your goals for the band was to educate the audience.

HR: I think it's the other way around: my goal is to learn from the audience.

Ben: So you don't think of yourself as evangelical at all?

HR: (HR smirks)

Ben: Oh, I'm sorry. Is that a bad word?

HR: I'm a human like you.

Ben: Right, but when I hear you on stage talking about Haile Selassie, Rasta Fari, it seems as if you are trying to convey something to the audience, or is that just for yourself?

HR: Yes, that's my personal conviction.

Nathan: When did Rastafarianism become part of your life?

HR: Well, perhaps since I was born, and the realization dawned in the early eighties, when I picked up my sword (his Bible), you know.

Nathan: Where do you get your inspiration for lyrics?

HR: Life, God, experiences, my son, my daughter...

Ben: "Viva Azania" seems to support the ANC. Would you like to comment on the release of Nelson Mandela and what's happening in South Africa now?

HR: Well, you know, music to me is an aspect of a change. I hadn't played anything like that up until that point. [I was just] basically doing the power chord structure thing or reggae, you know, and um, it was a big step for my mind in moving from the sixteen/sixteen time and going into a more four/four time beat with a keyboard. It was the first time I had done anything with melodic structures. To me, it was a time of wanting to spiritually awaken a side of me which I had always been afraid to. I guess you could say, reveal.

I have always liked all kinds of music. Then, when I was listening to the news...actually I heard a tape of a brethren saying "Viva Azania, Viva Azania", I said yeah, this stands, but I seek it out and I find out the ANC and Nelson Mandela use these words for the new Africa, new South Africa, so that's where the connection comes in. I've always been for the upstanding of people's struggles, you know? No

matter the race or religion. I can definitely say I in solidarity with Nelson Mandela. I really, really have a lot of respect for him and I admire his courage and I admire the South African people's ability to help, you know? I and I in these times still survive because whether you're black or white, you're still a child of God.

Nathan: How is your band working with SST?

HR: Well, you know, I can't say that they haven't been good to me, because they help me a lot.

Ben: I heard that SST was in some financial difficulty. Has that affected their ability to support you?

HR: I think that that is a side of the issue which I'm not too up on, you know, because I don't really think about those things a lot. I'm more into my music and God. Money is there, but I don't really worry about it.

Nathan: What kind of music do you listen to? What do you do on an average day?

HR: Well, I mostly go to the river if it doesn't rain, just cut some wood, burn a fire, eat a little food, read my Bible, rehearse. That's it.

Nathan: So you don't hear much of the music that's coming out now?

HR: Yeah, the music that I'm dealing with now is music that I've been wanting to deal with for a very long time now.

Ben: It seems like there's a lot of cross-fertilization between genres going on right now: rap bands using reggae, metal bands playing funk, KRS-1 appearing on the Sick Of It

All record, bands like 24-7 Spyz mixing styles. Much of this seems to stem from the Bad

Brains and also Human Rights. Do you see yourself as being very influential?

HR: I would hope that everybody could come together and create all kinds of music, feel free about what they're doing. When you first start out, you can not really play good, and a lot of the youths can't really professionally exploit their music to the total ultimate. See, the meek shall inherit the earth, so remember the days of the tower of Babel. They knew it wasn't good for them to be that high off the ground, but no one was strong enough to say, "This is wrong, we got to get back down on the ground or we're going to get in trouble." That's what happened and after a while, everything got confused.

So when you're in a band as a youth, music is innocent. Your perspective is real, so as you become more and more popular you learn what it is now to be a big

timer. Now if you don't control yourself and have discipline—which I've always worked for, you know, always worked toward expressing to I and I, not to lose sight of where you come from—then your music can grow still. While the image, the name—this and that, that and that—those are merely exploited to the max, you lose control over your music and yourself. And then people are not getting the real thing anymore.

Ben: There was a letter in Maximum Rock 'N' Roll interpreting "Don't Blow No Bubbles" off the new Bad Brains Record as homophobic and anti-gay and saying that the Bad Brains hate gays. It's a big controversy in the hardcore scene right now.

HR: I am totally against homosexuality, I don't advocate that at all.

Ben: Oh, really?

HR: Oh no, never.

Nathan: Why is that?

HR: Because it's dangerous, and it will kill you.

Carla: Are you saying it's immoral?

HR: No, I'm saying that if you catch the AIDS, you will die.

Carla: Are you against all sex then, because you can catch the AIDS virus from heterosexual contact as well?

HR: Heh, heh! I against having the exploitation of people's private portions. If you have a body (points to Ben), and you have a body (points to Carla), and you want to get together, now [if] she don't want to be with you, then no problem, you can find someone else to get together with, but not a man! Some people go through these experiences in life: some people start as gays and then they turn, and they come out of this gay business and start facing up to the reality that it was a bad for them.

BABBLE

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The World's Least Complex Pop Group

The Wedding Present are proud that after they appeared on 'Top of the Pops', a British TV program, their latest single "Brassneck" (RCA) dropped on the charts. David Gedge beams as he announces this on stage before the band performs the song. This supposed curse is lost on the American audience, but all recognize the joy of watching the Wedding Present's trademarks come to life. Guitars zoom along at a million miles per hour, interacting splendidly, while poignant lyrics are growled over the whole lot. The crowd dances.

It was June when WHPK's Mark Josephson and Mae Lum, and Adam Jacobs followed the Weddies (as they are affectionately known) around the Midwest during their 14-city North American tour to support the domestic release of *Bizarro*. This interview with David (singsmith, vocals, guitar) and Peter Solowka (guitar) took place in Detroit; not present are Keith Gregory (bass) and Simon Smith (drums). Then it was on to Chicago for the band to do another show and to spend 2 days with Steve Albini in the studio to record more material.

Mark: Since you guys are from Leeds, you must all have been in the Mekons at one point or another, since everybody in Leeds has been in the band at one time or another.

David: (laughs) Not exactly, no. Peter: No, I don't think any of us have been. In fact, I'd be surprised if any of us have actually talked to people in the Mekons.

David: I have. Jon Langford. Peter: Jon Langford, yeah. That was back in Rockland. And he wasn't in the Mekons—he was in the Three Johns—when you talked to him.

David: We were quite envious, because we had just spent ages and ages doing a soundcheck and getting it all sounding right and waiting up for the concert, and all they did—the Three Johns—because they just got a drum machine and guitars, was come over, fly over, half an hour before the gig started. Had a few drinks after the concert and that's it.

Peter: And go home again, that's great.

David: And we'd just spent the last few days travelling and everything for it.

Mae: You do benefit shows to support anti-poll tax and animal rights campaigns, and you've also contributed to the Alvin Lives and Sgt. Pepper compilations (which supported the anti-poll tax campaign and Childline, respectively). Do you consider yourselves political activists in some way, or what do you see as the connection between music and politics?

Peter: "Political activists" is probably a little bit strong.

David: Stretching it, really.

Mae: Politically conscious, then.

David: I think the main difference for us is that we don't wish to make a career out of it. You get these bands who preach as part of their way of selling records in some way, instead of having honest intentions.

Mae: You have a captive audience, so it's natural and it's easy.

David: Well, we never tell people what to do. We never say, what you're doing is wrong, you should do it this way.

Peter: All we do is make it clear at the gig we're going to that the funds are being raised for a certain cause.

Now if they don't want to do that, then they don't have to come up. We just go on to play the songs that we normally play at concert.

David: I think we're quite fortunate that we're in a position where we can actually contribute quite a bit to things like anti-poll tax.

Mae: And people will listen to you.

David: I'm not sure about that, actually.

Peter: I don't think it works that way. The thing for me is that you can actually raise money for funds which you think are worthwhile in a real easy way, which is truly convenient. In 1984, when there was a big miners' strike, I was out on the street twice a week, shaking a can and collecting the equivalent of...I don't know, I got about fifteen dollars for three hours' work. And now we can raise thousands, can't we?

David: Yeah. About ten thousand dollars in one night, I think.

Peter: So it seems like the best way we can contribute to causes instead of just taking a few pounds out of your pocket and putting it in a tin. It's much better to do concerts.

Mae: There are other causes that you support, besides the ones I mentioned (such as the Ambulance Strike Fund).

David: In some ways, we don't do too many now because we're getting a reputation in Britain.

Peter: And obviously overseas as well.

Mae: As being what?

David: As being a band who will lend their support to political organizations and charities.

Peter: We sometimes get more requests to do charity gigs than to do real gigs. Because they think, oh yeah, we've got the Wedding Present and they'll do it for us.



David: "So now we'll have a benefit for anti-apartheid, who should we get? Ah, a benefit. Who does benefits? The Wedding Present." It's an obvious choice. We haven't actually said no to anybody yet. Well, we've said no to people we've done benefits for before. You know, like anti-apartheid, and they came back to us after we did one. We say, no, because we've done one for you and we should give other people a chance.

Peter: There's actually a physical limit to the number of benefits you can do. It can get to the stage where we looked at all the concerts we've done in the first half of this year, a third to a half—I can't remember now—were actually benefits.

Mae: You weren't bringing in any money.

David: It wasn't that so much as time as well. You do a benefit concert, people think you just play the concert and make a lot of money, but you've got to rehearse for that concert. And you've got to go down on the day before. It's quite a big thing with those now because we're a big group in England. But it's very difficult to say no to some person calling on the phone [asking], will you do a benefit for this cause.

Peter: Some person who probably puts eight hours a day into the cause they believe in, and you say, we can't really do it because we need to spend a bit more time songwriting. It makes you feel really bad.

David: Pathetic, isn't it?

Peter: But it's the practicality about this business, there's not much else you can do.

Mae: What view of America are you trying to espouse in the song "Kennedy"?

David: I don't think there was any concrete thing, it was more like a collage, really, of images which are

referring to the assassination of the President in a supposed democratic country. Security organizations can get rid of their leader also, it's claimed. And it's a funny idea; I find it quite appealing. It was a bit of a diversion for me. I don't only write about the more personal aspects of relationships.

Mae: You do concentrate a lot on relationships in your songs, mostly betrayal and all that sort of stuff.

David: That's what they say, you know. I think some of the songs hold a line of different emotions.

Mae: I like the funnier lines, even in the betrayal songs, like, "I haven't worn a shirt like that since, oh, 1974" (from "Unfaithful").

David: I think betrayal is absolutely hilarious.

Mae: You make it seem hilarious.

David: Well, it is. People will do the funniest things when they're under that kind of pressure. I think. You can even laugh at yourself, the things that you did about a year ago when your girlfriend left you. It will be completely ludicrous, when you think about it in a straightforward way.

Adam: How many relationships are you drawing on?

Mae: Or betrayals? Have you been dumped many times?

David: I've probably had the same number of relationships and betrayals as anybody else, but I tend to break things down into very small segments. I could probably write about four songs out of a fifteen-minute conversation, if it was exciting enough. If there was enough going on. As I said, people do really strange things in strange situations. I think there's a few songs which have actually been constructed around the idea of one sentence, like "Why can't I ever say what I mean?" (from "What Have I Said Now?"), and from that, I've thought about the idea of complications arising from not being able to say what you mean at a certain time.

Mae: Do you find yourself facing that?

David: Of course, everybody faces that, at one time or another.

Peter: There's a knock on the door.

David: It's probably your bloke. (Peter leaves the room)

Mae: Why do you consider yourselves the "world's least complex pop group" (quoted on the sleeve in Tommy)? Is it because you're dictated by simple emotions?

David: It was actually a description that somebody else used. And it wasn't particularly in praise of the group; he was sort of saying that we were quite simple and therefore, not very particularly entertaining. I thought it sounded like quite a good phrase so we turned around and used it ourselves. I don't know if it's a good thing to say or a bad thing but...

Mae: At least you don't pass yourself off as a tortured artist.



David: Well, that's it. I don't feel like I'm any special kind of human being, just because I'm in a group and I play the guitar. I think some people tend to, and I don't see why. (Peter comes back into the room)

Peter: Gang of thieves.

Mae: I just asked David the question of why you

consider yourselves the "world's least complex pop group".

Peter: Why? Because we are. I don't think we pretend to be anything that we're not.

David: That's like what I said.

Peter: Is it? See, you ask us a question, you get a straight answer.

David: Being in a pop group is actually one of the least complicated things you can do.

Mae: High turnover. Doesn't have the hierarchy that rock music does.—That's what Alan McGee says.

David: He's more articulate than me.

Adam: When did you actually start?

David: What, playing the guitar?

Peter: Thirteen years old.

Adam: The band you and Keith were in and then, the Wedding Present.

David: We started when two members of that band, which was called Lost Pandas, went to America, so that's when we decided to get two more people, one of which was Peter. We released a record, and that was about 1985. Until then, the other band was more like a hobby, really.

Adam: I've heard [John] Peel [of BBC Radio 1] say that the Lost Pandas tapes are really excellent.

David: I don't think you have, actually.

Adam: Haven't I?

David: I think he actually said they were quite valuable.

Adam: Oh, maybe that's it.

David: And collectable, I would imagine that, because I'm sure people would like to have them. Then I try my level best not to let them hear them.

Peter: I've already sold a few, me. I wasn't in it, was I? Not my problem.

Adam: So I should write to you.

Peter: Yeah, I'll sell you a few. Give me a good price. (laughs)

Mae: What have the other two members gone on to do?

David: Well, funny you should say that, because Michael—he was the guitarist—is now in a group called the Dustdevils. The drummer called Charles works in a bookshop in London. That's rather less glamorous, I suppose. We actually played with the Dustdevils in Hoboken. It was quite nice to see him. We hadn't seen him for about two and a half years because he used to live in Leeds.

Adam: How's the tour been going?

David: Makes an English tour look like a walk around the block.

Peter: (laughs) That's a good one.

David: Every concert's been different. In Britain, because we're quite big and well-known, every concert's the same pretty much now. But here [in the US], like in Boston, it's a really big place and everyone knows us.

Peter: It's a very English sort of town.

David: It's been strangely familiar, because you get a lot of American culture in Britain—from television, film and music. So we recognize the accents and the buildings.

Peter: It's really funny, that first day in New York, and you get out, you just think you're on a film set.

Mark: Getting back to the subject of complexity, Bizarro seems a lot more complex musically than what you've been doing on previous records. It seems to rely less on the straight-ahead, hit-'em-with-everything-you've-got-on-the-guitar approach.

David: I guess so. It's all relative. In terms of most rock or pop bands, it's still pretty simple.

Mark: I couldn't see anything like "No" as any of the singles which make up Tommy.

Peter: That's definitely true. In that time period, we've changed quite a lot. Even compared to *George Best*, we've tried to make it more varied, more of a complete lp. I think we're all happier with it than we are with *George Best*.

David: I think we just got experience while we made *George Best*. We were completely inexperienced, really. Basically we got all the best songs from our sets, and that was all, pretty much. But with *Bizarro*, we sat around and pondered a bit more and made sure there was more structure there. And I think...I mean, it's probably not for me to say, but I think we probably improved as songwriters and in terms of getting the right sound in the studio, stuff like that. ...more...

Mae: The obvious question is, why did you choose Steve Albini to engineer the single "Brassneck"?

David: Because he's such a nice bloke... No, he was quite offensive, really. We wanted him because he's a good engineer and the records he's worked on have all been very powerful. I think it's been our own fault in the past that we've not been able to quite sound as live as we'd like on a record. Because I think we're fairly good live, maybe because it's loud and exciting, but, like, "Brassneck" is one of my favorite songs, and when we played it at home, I thought, wait, it sounds like a demo tape. It lacked that extra spark, which Albini provided. "Brassneck" now sounds harder, more powerful, bigger.

It's not a mysterious thing; before you're in a group, you always think, how do you do it, how do you choose famous engineers? You just find out his address and say, do you want to work with the band? We thought he'd say, "Go fuck yourself, you English pussy," or something. He didn't, actually; he said, yeah alright.

Mae: I heard that he'd produce anybody for a flat 250 fee.

David: No, I think he'd set Depeche Mode down. And I imagine they had done a lot for him. We thought of him and also thought of John Leckie, who has produced The Fall.

Mark: Where did you run across that Pavement single ("Box Elder", covered on the "Brassneck" 12-inch)?

David: It was Keith's. On one of his visits to his friends in New York, he came back with the single.

Adam: Do you do much production in the studio?

Peter: We don't tend to do what bands traditionally do. I think bands traditionally, when they record singles and lps, leave it all to the producer to say, alright, you've got this song as it is now, and maybe if you put a little twiddle here or a little backing vocal there...And that's what producers tend to do. But we don't do that, we have that all worked out among the four of us before we go in, then we just record it. So I suppose we produce it as well.

David: The main things we rely on are engineers and pieces of advice on sounds. Now we say what kind of sound we want, and they try to recreate that. We don't know anything about microphones and amplifiers and stuff like that.

Peter: If you've ever seen one of those big recording desks, you know how complex they are. You can't just say, hey, I've just got to twiddle that one, and you've got it perfect.

David: People run into trouble then.

Adam: Isn't there a cover on the "All About Eve" single?

David: "Getting Nowhere Fast". That was a song by a band called Girls at

Our Best!, in Leeds. It's not on their lp *Pleasure*, it's their first single. They did four singles and an lp, I think. In fact, the lyrics to "Getting Nowhere Fast" are actually on the lyric sleeve of that lp, even though the track is not even on the record, for some reason. Because that's where I got the words.

Adam: Do you know what song you're going to do on the *Velvet Underground* cover lp *Heaven*, released in early September?

David: Yeah, uh...

Peter: "She's My Best Friend".

Adam: What cover songs do you do live, if ever?

David: Occasionally. We get bored of playing them fairly quickly. We've been doing the song off the anti-pol

"Being in a pop group is actually one of the least complicated things you can do."

tax compilation (*Alvni Lives*). [The songs there are] all covers of number ones from the British chart of the seventies.

Peter: Funny thing is, many of them are not known over here at all, are they?

David: "Make Me Smile (Come Up and See Me)" is quite a good song. I think we're going to record it again anyway, with Albini (on the "Three Songs" ep, released in September).

Mae: (to David) You've been quoted as saying that the only reason why you got involved in a band is because of Mark E. Smith and John Peel.

David: Well, I think Mark Smith's influence was essentially that he was a musician who was quite able to do anything he wanted, rather than be guided by the music business or record companies. It's like he's completely his own master. I think that's the main influence there.

John Peel's provided everything else, really. I've been a fan of his program since as long as I can remember. It's more a case of actually wanting to be on that program. In some ways, the idea of doing a session for that program was pretty more important to me than actually releasing a record. Because it's quite exciting to be on there after being a fan for so long. It's almost like being asked to be on "Bewitched" or something, as a guest.

Adam: As of a year ago, you told me you had done eight sessions. I'm sure there have been a few since then.

Peter: There probably hasn't been any since then, actually.

David: We've done nine now, I think. There's a third Ukrainian. One, he has less sessions to give out now, because there's one session a night where there used to be two.

Adam: I know his hours have been cut back. And he's only on three days now, isn't he?

David: He's on four days again now, but it's still an hour and a half. There used to be eight sessions a week, and now there's four. (He is now on only on weekends—Ed.) And secondly, I think he prefers to give sessions out to new bands, which is fair enough, so we haven't been asked for a while. We never really needed that exposure in the first place, but we did it because we thought it'd be a great idea to do one and it was, we enjoyed them. It's a really good way of recording as well, because you go in there in midday and it's got to be finished by midnight. And that quickens everything up.

Adam: Does anyone else besides Andy Kershaw and Janice Long also record sessions?

David: Well, Janice Long, I'm afraid, doesn't do any more now. It's quite a funny story, actually, because she got pregnant, so she had to leave temporarily and then they wouldn't let her back.

Adam: That's illegal in this country.

Peter: It should be in Britain as well.

David: It was kind of shrouded in mystery because no one wanted to say, though. But I think they were waiting for an excuse to get rid of her because they didn't like her. I think she's been outspoken. And Andy Kershaw concentrates on world music now a lot more, African music.

Adam: So there's no one left now but Peel?

David: That's right. It's not that bad; it's quite a good show because it's national and it's the BBC so there are no adverts and it's not guided by any sort of commercial restraints. And we've got our music papers as well, of course.

Adam: What kind of instrumentation did you use on the Ukrainian tour?

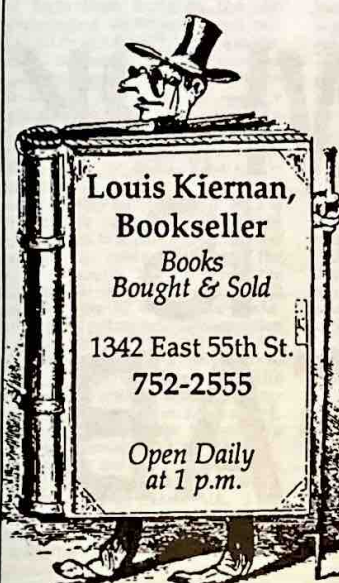
Peter: A lot of complex, squeaky ethnic instruments, which feedback a lot. Violins, two mandolins, an accordion and an occasional flute, in addition to all the other stuff we usually use.

David: That triangular thing.

Peter: A balalaika, yeah, with three strings on it. Loads and loads of different things.

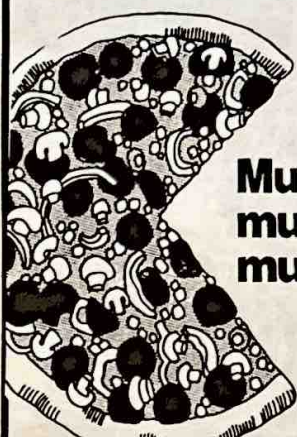
Adam: You must have had much more material than the three sessions

POP continued on page 15



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WHPK IS FAB!

KILL continued from page 2

and bass hum hang in the air, accompanying an echoing vocal call. What starts out sounding like a single, perfect, monolithic, metal movement (a good enough thing in this age when the Swans pretty much are the Righteous Brothers and Metallica belch out hour-long guitar solos), repeats, like a weird invocation. Gradually, as the single groove totally dominates the moment, it changes—easing back, fading away into a surprisingly deliberate quiet and building back in a pure shriek. This is a sound that refers to nothing; the only lyrics are the static images of the title, redolent of the bleak and muscular joy of a cement world. Rather than redundant, the repetition is reductive: Null strips away the trivial movements of a heavy metal song, cracks the bones of the structure and sucks out the marrow.

Another Japanese minimalist, **Merzbow** (named after Schwitters' "Merzbau" construction and demonstrating that for him, at least, the Dada references are conscious), played recently in Lowell, MA. I am told that he miked a bookcase for sound and then carefully demolished it, savoring the acoustics of physical destruction. One of his projects is available on RRRRecords; the unpredictable impacts and evolving rhythms

evoke the event-oriented music of Karlheinz Stockhausen, but end up being a strangely peaceful record. He is also rumored to use army-type flash grenades and teargas.

In their dress, songs and packaging, Japanese bands take the seamless web of image, music, and marketing of US rock, and shove it up its own ass for the sheer fun of it. Three all-female bands make this point clearer (and probably catchier). The **News** have a cd on Ika-Ten that melds the peppy percussion and chant of their previous "NOINOINOI" 7" with bizarrely arranged kickass Who-style rock opera to tell the story of being a Japanese office girl. Yeah, it actually works; on the back cover of the cd booklet they smile as if they can do anything.

Sekiri (means "dysentery"), who have an ep out on Public Bath, sound like a harder version of the Raincoats, or maybe the Go-Gos with knives. They have songs about dental problems, a cheerful "Let's Break Up" and an odd one about a girl whose unattractiveness may be "a new kind of sex". They also have a video from Alchemy, their Japanese label, of the band on vacation. In it, they spoof Japanese soap operas: one girl, dressed as a cycle tough, unseriously rapes another girl's wife, who kills herself. The agonized mechanics of Japanese gender relations are played

as a lark. In the same video, they go swimming with rubber float toys and tell us their zodiac signs.

Finally, the much-misunderstood **Shonen Knife**, all graduates of the prestigious Kyoto University, chime barbed comments on their Giant Ip. In "Twist Barbie", they sing cheerfully about the desire to be a plastic doll who's got "long legs, blonde hair, blue eyes." The point is that the (literal) model of the white "sexy girl" is a totally ridiculous pain-in-the-ass for Japanese women. This is a band who also sings a sad little song about the poor "bananafish" who ate too many bananas. The story is, of course, told by the brilliant writer Seymour Glass right before he kills himself in JD Salinger's "A Perfect Day for Bananafish." Their irony slips right past dimwitted rock critics; check out August's *Rolling Stone* for the sound of vinyl whizzing over Chuck Eddy's head. In fact, if he didn't also write for the nambypamby *Village Voice*, I'd suspect Captain Eddy of the RACIST AND SEXIST longing for a happy, nubile, Asian Beach Boys or a version of the Shaggs who we ren't fat and could play. No way, Chuck: this stuff is directly in your face.

—Seth L. Sanders, with thanks to LL Herman for most of the musical and factual material.

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provided to do an entire concert of Ukrainian songs.

Peter: Yeah, we did. When we decided to do something live, we chose probably half a dozen of the ones from the first two sessions which we thought we could play quite well live. Then we put another half a dozen songs to them which were either new covers we'd learned or... (Mark flips over tape)... and put them together in a live set. So there's some stuff we played live which is not anywhere on record yet.

Mark: You mentioned there was a third session.

Peter: The third session is part of some of the new songs that we played live at that time, and there's been others since like that, about 12. We actually just finished recording about 12 or 13 or 14 tracks, which will work out exactly, hopefully, on some lp we'll release sometime, but I don't know when.

Adam: Are you going to do it under the name *The Wedding Present* again?

Peter: No, because it confuses a lot of people. Exactly what name we'll use, we're not sure. There's only one we could possibly play live, and that was one we used to do even before we did any Ukrainian stuff.

David: It's a really tight budget, so we only brought seven people over (the band, roadie, driver and sound engineer). Because we're losing money. And to do Ukrainian stuff, you'd have to bring two extra people.

Peter: And bring them for two, three songs a set too. It'd be ridiculous, and soundchecks would take three times as long, with all the instruments.

Adam: Isn't RCA helping you out with the tour?

David: Yeah. But we're not one of these bands who try to screw the record company for as much money as we possibly can. In the end, it's our money, because it comes out of our record royalties. And we don't like wasting money, which is the way we always were. There's so much waste, as you probably know, in the music business. You can get these people who want to be tour managers for thousands of dollars a week, and all they do is book you into motels and make sure the riders are right. I mean, it's something you can do yourself, really, which is something we pride ourselves on. We delegate all the various tasks to people in the group.

It's quite funny because people always say, you can't go on doing this forever, because it's going to get harder. But we did the tour in Europe, and we managed, and we did the Eastern bloc tour, and we managed, and then we come to America... it's harder over here, certainly. There's more to do, because

you've got visas and stuff, but it's far better than wasting money paying some bloke to do it.

Mae: Have you changed your stand on not doing encores in the U.S., because people expect them?

David: Oh no. In fact, we're better off not doing them because in Britain, we used to do them. But in America, because we started off not doing them, no one expects them now. We've acquired a reputation. I always thought it was a really strange idea. You do a concert, then you walk off the stage and stand there for three minutes, then you walk out and do another song. It seems a lot more simpler to do the song in your set.

Mae: I think it's a show of appreciation

"...we're not interested in being a fashionable band. We've always operated outside of the mainstream."

by the fans. They love your show so much, they want you to come out again and do more.

David: It doesn't really work like that. There are some bands who will do encores at the drop of a hat. Also, if someone makes a cake and everyone says, "That's a really nice cake there," they don't put an extra layer of custard on it.

Adam: Or put little cupcakes on the side.

David: (laughs) That's right. We spend a lot of time on working out the set: it's got a beginning, a middle and an end. To do a bit more is strange. And also, it's good for people who've got to get off, if they've got to get a train or something. For me, the perfect set runs about 35 minutes. Even if it's my favorite group in the world, after fifteen minutes, I'll start looking around.

Peter: From the playing point-of-view, it's hard to concentrate intensively for a long amount of time. You'll find that you start to make more mistakes the longer the set goes on.

David: We're quite an energetic band, really.

Adam: "What Becomes of the Broken Hearted?" and "It's What You Want

That Matters"—why the change in titles?

David: We did a Peel session—it was our first, I think—and we didn't have a title for that song. On the spur of the moment, Keith said, "Oh, let's call it 'What Becomes of the Broken Hearted?'" And I said, alright. Then as soon as we did the session, I regretted it because I thought of another title which seemed to make more sense. So we changed it for the lp, which again, I regretted because it gave the impression that we were trying to make people think it was a different song.

Mae: So you're into clean living, you don't drop ecstasy with Alan McGee or anything like that?

Peter: What is she talking about?

David: I don't know. Ecstasy.

Peter: I've never dropped anything, me.

David: I've dropped a few guitars, I've dropped a camera a few times, that's it. It's probably broken by now. I suppose we are a straight-edge band. I suppose we're probably thought of as a frump to many people, but we just don't like smoking in the dressing room. Well, I never drink before I play.

Adam: It's far better. You can remember most of your gigs, can't you?

David: On the rare occasions where I actually had a glass of wine before I played, I completely forgot the lyrics. I've got a severe inability to take my beer, as we say in England. Peter, on the other hand, is totally opposite from me. He can't play unless he's had his.

Peter: I'm blindfolded on stage every night.

Mae: I imagine you listen to other music as well, like rap.

David: I'm a bit bored with it, actually. I thought it'd run its course until De La Soul came along and sort of re-defined it in many ways. And there have been bands since, like A Tribe Called Quest, which carried it on. I'm just about sustaining interest in it. I think it's quite a limited sort of style. From England, Birdland. I think they're the ones to watch. Primal Scream's brilliant, my favorite group... for the moment.

Mark: So you like Creation bands?

David: It's my favorite label. Creation is really good, I think.

Mae: I'm a Creation completist.

David: Are you? I could never understand that. The thing is, you have to buy records you don't like. It's quite difficult, isn't it, to get the early stuff?

Mae: Yes, but I have to. I think Creation has so much style.

David: That Primal Scream thing, "Loaded," is the best record they've ever made. But that's probably because all they do is go, (in a falsetto) "We don't care about that" (sic), and the rest of it is Andy Weatherall.

(everyone laughs) (Actually, that chorus is sampled from the Edwin Hawkins Singers—Ed.)

I think he just makes good records and I'm quite fond of dance music, yeah. But I wouldn't want to do it now because everyone else is doing it at the moment. You got to remember, in Britain, everyone wants to be really fashionable and the whole music scene is dominated by trends and fashions. In 1989, it was the fashion to be a dance music group, and I think for us to start making a dance music record now, they'd probably say, the Wedding Present are trying to get on the bandwagon.

Adam: But you're being able to survive without it.

David: That's because we're not interested in being a fashionable band. We've always operated outside of the mainstream, in many ways. It's never felt important to us. You know, we write songs and we make records, and if everyone hates them because they sound old-fashioned or they don't fit into the current scheme of things, then it's tough. It probably makes us sound quite selfish, but I don't think we could do it any other way because we wouldn't be happy, really.

Mae: I heard you like the Happy Mondays.

David: The Happy Mondays are great,

especially live. The whole place dances, even the road crew and the sound engineers and the driver. It's really, really nice. Oh, they're a bit loutish and everyone is on drugs like Alan McGee.

Mae: Don't tell him I said that about him.

David: He'll shoot you.

Mark: Is Reception (their own label) pretty much dead now that you're on RCA?

Peter: Sleeping.

David: It's in a coma. If we ever get a recording that RCA doesn't think is commercial enough, we'll release it on Reception Records.

Mark: But you're not looking for other bands to put records out. (Bands that have been on Reception are Cud and This Poison!)

David: I'd like to be able to, but it's so time-consuming. It's really a nice thing to do, to be able to put out records that you're fond of, but our time is taken up writing songs and running the group and the merchandising and all the rest of it. Making the newsletters. I think sometimes we've bitten off more than we can chew.

Peter: Sometimes you get that feeling.

David: You get a group like the Primitives, for instance, who don't do anything at all but sit around writing

songs. And their manager does everything. He's at RCA, he does all the business, he does all the merchandising, everything. But our manager doesn't do anything like that because we do it ourselves. In some ways, we do bring it on ourselves but it's the only way we could probably do it, I think.◊

BABBLE continued from page 7

They just wanted to try it out. They never was really gay, and they say, well, shit, I used to be gay, but I'm straight now.

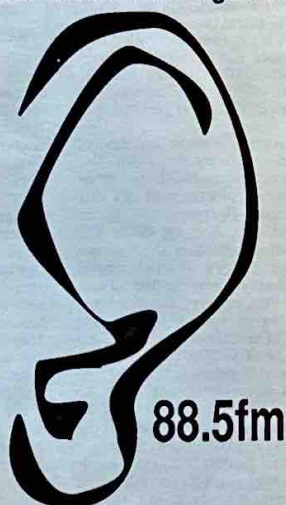
Carla: But some people stay gay for their whole lives.

HR: Well, there's nothing wrong with being happy, you know. See, the first word for gay means happy, it don't mean perversion. That's why when you ask if I think it's ok to be gay, I say yes, it's ok for someone to be happy. I'm not saying that they're homosexually happy, I'm just saying that happy, ok.

Ben: Alright, I guess I'm just asking if you are condemning homosexuality out of hand.

HR: To condemn human beings is not my duty, and it's wrong for men to judge others.◊

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Fall 1990 Discography

The Wedding Present

All releases on Reception (UK), unless noted.

Selected list:

- "Go Out and Get 'Em Boy!" (7" only; also released on City Slang Records (UK)) (1985)
- "Once More" (7" only) (1986)
- "Don't Try and Stop Me Mother" (12" only; compilation of first two singles) (1986)
- "You Should Always Keep In Touch with Your Friends" (12" (1986)
- "The Peel Sessions" (Strange Fruit (UK), 1986)
- "My Favourite Dress" (12" (1987)
- "Anyone Can Make a Mistake" (12" (1987)
- George Best (1987)
- "Nobody's Twisting Your Arm" (12" & cd) (1988)
- "Why Are You Being So Reasonable Now?" (12", cd & cassette) (1988)
- "Pourquoi Es Tu Devenue Si Raisonnable?" (French version; also as extra track on "Why Are You Being So Reasonable Now?", cd & cassette only) (1988)
- "Radio 1 Sessions: The Evening Show" (12" & cd) (Strange Fruit/Nighttracks (UK), 1988)
- Tommy (early singles and BBC Radio One sessions) (1988)
- "Getting Better" on Sgt. Pepper Knew My Father compilation (NME/Island (UK), 1988; also on "Why Are You Being So Reasonable Now?", except 7")
- "Happy Birthday" on The Kindness of Strangers compilation (Give for Life (UK), 1988)
- "Kennedy" (12", cd & cassette) (RCA (UK), 1989)
- Ukrainki Vistup V Johna Peela (Ukrainian John Peel Sessions) (RCA (UK), 1989)
- official live bootleg of Manchester concert of April 30, 1989 (Ukrainian performance) (Grappier & Sons: Peter Solowka's outfit)
- Bizarro (RCA, 1989)
- "Brassneck" (12", cd & cassette) (RCA (UK), 1990)
- "Make Me Smile (Come Up and See Me)" on Alvin Lives (In Leeds) compilation (Sound of Spasm/Midnight Music (UK), 1990; Albini-produced version on latest 12")
- "Three Songs" (3-song 12") (RCA (UK), September 1990)

The Blake Babies

Nicely, Nicely (Chew Bud, 1987)
Earwig (Mammoth, 1990)
Slow Learner (subset of Earwig) (Utility (UK), 1990)

HR

Selected list:

In Human Rights:

It's About Luv (Olive Tree, 1985)
Human Rights (SST, 1987)
Singing in the Heart (SST, 1989)

In Bad Brains:

"Pay to Cum" b/w "Stay Close to Me" (7" (self-produced, 1980)
"Don't Bother Me" on Best of Limp compilation (Limp, 1980)
Bad Brains (cassette only) (Reach Out Intl., 1981)
"Pay to Cum" on Let Them Eat Jellybeans compilation (Alternative Tentacles, 1981)
"How Low Can a Punk Go?" on Rat Music for Rat People: Vol. 1 compilation (Gol Records, 1982)
"Regulator" and "Big Take Over" on New York Thrash compilation (Reach Out Intl., 1982)
Rock for Light (Jem, 1983)
I Against I (SST, 1986)
Bad Brains Live (SST, 1988)
Quickness (Caroline, 1989)
Live in Amsterdam (Caroline, 1990)
Attitude (lp release of ROIR cassette material) (Caroline, 1990)

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Addresses of labels referred to:

RRRecords, 151 Paige St., Lowell, MA 01852
Public Bath, P.O. B. 2134, Madison, WI 53701
Nux Organization, 3-690-47, Hibarigaoka, Zama, Kanagawa, Japan
Dossier, Prinzenallee 47b, D-1000 Berlin 65, FRG

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